

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 215-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: August 10, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge M. Gonzalez".

Subject: Miami Beach Police Department

Attached for your information is a copy of a memorandum submitted to the members of the Miami Beach Police Department addressing issues discussed at a recent meeting with FOP members.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

JMG\pw

Attachment

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CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
City Manager's Office
Interoffice Memorandum



To: Members of the Miami Beach Police Department

Date: August 10, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorge'.

Subject: Follow up to our June 30, 2004 Meeting

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide to you, additional information on the issues and topics discussed during our meeting on June 30, 2004 and to provide an update on some of the actions we have taken since that meeting. As you may recall, I replied directly and immediately to many of the questions posed that evening. I believe that a lot of information was shared and we learned a lot from the exchange that evening. I was honest and clear in explaining why certain decisions have been made or certain initiatives had been implemented. And I am grateful for the honesty and candor that many of you shared with me. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, my goal was to share information, to educate and explain, and most importantly, to listen and learn. I hope you will agree that the meeting was extremely productive and served its intended purposes.

While many topics were covered during our three hour meeting, some big some not so big, a few key themes did arise. In my assessment, they were:

1. Resources, Staffing and Manpower Issues
2. Community Policing and RDA Economics
3. Equipment, Benefits and Specialty Unit Assignments
4. Access to and communication with department leadership

1. Resources, Staffing and Manpower Issues

Public safety has been, and continues to be a key priority for the Mayor, the City Commission and the residents of Miami Beach. Furthermore, I have declared publicly, on numerous occasions that providing for Public Safety and for Public Works are the two basic functions of any municipality. In my tenure with the City of Miami Beach, I have steadfastly supported our public safety initiatives and have always allocated funding to meet the department's needs. We have worked to provide the necessary resources, training and leadership within the department to ensure that we remain the best trained, best equipped and best supported police force. Under my leadership and with the support of our elected officials, funding for the MBPD will have grown by almost \$20 million per year since FY 2000, representing an increase of more than 48% over the past five years. The department now represents nearly 37% of the City's proposed general fund budget.

I have included \$66.2 million in the FY 2004-2005 proposed operating budget to fund the MBPD. This represents an increase of \$4.9 million in general funds, almost one third of the overall growth in the general fund. This increase represents fully funding current service levels (including \$4.1 million in salary and benefits expenses resulting from rising pension costs and other items resulting from the collective bargaining agreement). This figure also includes \$4.8 million funded by the RDAs to augment our resources. The proposed budget provides for six additional police officers on the streets. This will be accomplished through a series of reassignments within the MBPD, the expansion of the community policing efforts in the RDAs and our involvement in the region's Terrorism Task Force. Combined with the 23 added to patrol last year, we now have almost 30 more sworn officers patrolling our streets and providing for our public safety. The proposed budget will increase our overall sworn compliment to 386.

In spite of these additions, a comment made during our meeting immediately resonated with me. I agree that we should shift the discussion away from "minimum staffing" and to focus more appropriately on "optimal staffing." This goal is something I have made a key objective in the upcoming fiscal year. I have included funding to commission an independent professional consultant study to determine the optimal staffing needs of the City of Miami Beach, given the variety of demands placed on the MBPD and the uniqueness of our community. This study will explore best practices across the country to determine the optimal staffing model to best serve our residents, business owners and visitors. I fully expect that this review will result in analysis regarding staffing, time and motion studies, workload and fatigue factors, innovations in policing tactics, scheduling and specialty assignments. I have already discussed with the FOP President, my intention to create a Steering Committee to guide the work of the consultant. This Committee, of course, will include appropriate representation from a variety of stakeholders including the FOP. My expectation is that the results of this analysis will guide staffing and resource allocation needs of the MBPD for the foreseeable future.

Other actions taken since our meeting:

- Authorized overstaffing of five police officer positions to anticipate upcoming vacancies and appropriately plan for attrition
- Authorized the following promotions:

FROM : Major Patricia Schneider Lieutenant Louis Fata Sergeant Robert Elmore Sergeant James Hyde Sergeant Larry Bornstein Detective Sam Bejar Officer Henry Doce Records Mgr. Mike Gruen	TO: Assistant Chief of Police Captain of Police Lieutenant of Police Lieutenant of Police Lieutenant of Police Sergeant of Police Sergeant of Police Planning & Research
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- Filled 14 positions which place the MBPD nearly at full staffing with the authorization to continue hiring above full staffing to address upcoming vacancies.
- Directed command staff to explore the creation of a Voluntary Special Events team to address our peak needs during special events. I have asked that a proposed draft be submitted for my review by mid August.

2. Community Policing and RDA Economics

A number of comments made and a series of questions posed during our meeting led me to conclude that there was some misunderstanding over how the Redevelopment Agencies work and are governed in the City of Miami Beach. I understand the confusion that can arise when we all see the construction, development and property appreciation that has occurred in Miami Beach, yet resources remain constrained. You should note that a great deal of this growth in the recent years, particularly the new development has occurred in either the South Pointe or City Center RDAs. The laws governing redevelopment agencies are very clear: All ad valorem revenue generated by the increment in the RDA must be spent on primarily capital projects located within the geographic boundaries of the RDA. A change in state statutes a few years ago, amended the approved uses of RDA funds, allowing for the creation of "community policing" initiatives. Recognizing the opportunity to augment general fund resources and at the same time expand services in two areas of the City where residents were expressing concerns over nuisances that were affecting their quality of life we immediately moved to amend our RDA plan with Miami-Dade County and created our community policing initiative. \$3.6 million was included in the FY 2003-2004 to initiate our plan and we have included \$4.7 million in my recommended FY 2004-2005 operating budget, bringing our two year investment in new police resources to almost \$8.4 million. This funding represents an increase in staffing of 18 sworn police officers, including promotional opportunities for two sergeants and one lieutenant.

In addition to creating the additional promotional opportunities, I am confident that the individuals who have received assignments to the community policing teams in our RDAs will make this initiative a key and critical component of our policing efforts, giving us the opportunity to experiment with innovations in tactics, equipment and/or policing efforts to better address our residents', business owner's and visitor's needs. In time, I believe that the RDA teams will become a model of efficient, proactive and exceptional policing for all of South Florida.

3. Equipment, Benefits and Specialty Unit Assignments

The issues regarding equipment were quite surprising to me. Throughout my tenure as City Manager, I have always made sure that the MBPD has all of the equipment it needs and that we experiment with best equipment and technology available. The City has invested \$8.395 million in a new 800 mhz radio system to upgrade our communications, our investment in technology in the MBPD has grown and will continue to do so.

The following items are in the process of being purchased (or already purchased): an additional 100 laptop computers, AIU-Laser Reconstruction equipment, Shoot House Firearms Training program, Personal Protection Equipment for all sworn personnel, new Field Force equipment (including Hatch gear for the entire department, 10 Pepper Ball guns, Riot Helmets, four 40mm Grenade Launchers), new AIU furniture, Nextel Phones for SIU / some CIU personnel, authorized the purchase of a new command van, off-site locations for SIU, CST, and RDA, less than lethal munitions, radio car chargers, 165 tasers to date, 40 caliber sig sauer firearms, instituted the carbine rifle program, the E Citation program, three new K9's and associated vet bills (estimated at \$1,800 for each dog), all associated equipment for a new RDA officer (i.e. cars, bikes, ATV, uniforms, guns), and a new SWAT van.

Throughout the year extensive training opportunities were also provided; you may get a comprehensive listing from the Chief's office.

During the discussion a question was raised regarding the replacement of command staff vehicles. For clarification, during calendar year 2004, three command staff vehicles were purchased. During calendar year 2003, one command staff vehicle was purchased. At no time have all command staff vehicles been replaced.

I have directed our Risk Management Office to investigate some of the issue raised regarding our Worker's Compensation Program. We will be conducting a survey of our employees who have recently received this service to better determine the quality of service and their level of satisfaction. In addition, staff will begin the steps necessary to pursue a Request for Proposal (if necessary) to review prospective providers.

With regard to specialty unit assignments, we must all remember that our first priority is to provide adequate staffing to patrol. Recent increases in calls for service and special events have resulted in personnel being reassigned to the Patrol Division. This follows our continued efforts to be more proactive in enforcing our Quality of Life/Order Maintenance laws. Our Shift Overlap Initiative should continue to focus our energy in addressing those issues that are most directly and visibly affecting the lives of our residents, business owners and visitors. I want to reiterate, very clearly, my support for this initiative and also restate that I, in no way, support or want a quota system! The program is successful only if each of you make it successful and actively participate and make it your job to ensure that the Quality of Life on Miami Beach is preserved and enhanced.

4. Access to and communication with department leadership

I am very committed to ensuring that lines of communications are always maintained. While I am comfortable that the lines of communication between the FOP or the rank and file and me are good and functional, I believe that the more opportunities to exchange ideas in formal and informal ways exist the better off we all are. Since our meeting, I have sought out members of the MBPD individually and in small groups to better understand the concerns and feelings of our rank and file. I will continue to seek out your opinion and I encourage you to reach out to me as well.

Furthermore, while I also believe that there exists good communication between the command staff and the FOP or the rank and file, I also firmly believe that communications can always be improved. I have directed Chief DeLucca to initiate a formal Labor-Management Committee structure to ensure regular, routine and structured discussions with all stakeholders. This tool is a commonly used structure to ensure that issues of mutual interest are appropriately discussed and the opportunity for input is provided. A Labor-Management Committee process brings people together to discuss issues, it also broadens the level of discussion involving more people. It, however, does not and will not substitute for the authority vested in the Chief of Police, his command staff or the elected positions of the FOP. In addition the Chief has also held one – on – one meetings with all sergeants and lieutenants, holds regular shift representative meetings, puts pertinent information in the official bulletin, and publishes the notes from the command staff meetings.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of our meeting in June, I posed a very probing question: *“What is going well, or what are we doing right that you would like to see more of?”*

While we had spent two and one half hours discussing the areas of your concern or areas needing improvement, I wanted to spend the final 30 minutes focusing on those things that are going well. It is always important to take stock of our circumstances and pause to appreciate what we sometimes take for granted. I hope that since then each of you has had a chance to reflect on that question and each of you has had an opportunity to come up with your own list to answer that question. Your reply to that question is in many ways why you choose to be a part of the MBPD and remain committed to your chosen profession. In time, I look forward to learning what your individual and collective thoughts are on that important question.

I hope that the information I have shared with you will augment the very good dialogue we had in June. I assure you that the Mayor and City Commission, the Chief of Police and I are all very supportive of your efforts and will do what we can to ensure your success. This department has made significant progress since 2000 and I fully support Chief DeLucca's efforts to make sure that we continuously improve as an organization and that we become the best that we can be. You are members of and make up an exceptionally professional police department which is the envy of the region.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the members of the Miami Beach Police Department for the exceptional service you provide to the residents, business owners and visitor of Miami Beach. Your dedication and professionalism is evident in the high regard and respect that our department commands in the region and in the successful law enforcement practices we employ here at home. You meet the challenges of our ever evolving community and public safety needs on a daily basis. You should all feel proud of the work you do on behalf of everyone who lives, works, visits, and plays in Miami Beach. I certainly am proud of you.

JMG: ptw

c: Mayor and City Commission
Don DeLucca, Chief of Police
Robert Jenkins, President, Fraternal Order of Police

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